

Message Text

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ACTION EA-07

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2185
INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 7822

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID BE
SUBJECT: INDOCHINA DONORS' MEETING

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 6844; (B) STATE 192069

1. WE CALLED ON DEDOBBEKER AND DARON YESTERDAY TO FOLLOW UP QUESTION OF BELGIAN PARTICIPATION IN MEETING OF INDOCHINA DONORS' GROUP IN PARIS NEXT WEEK. DEDOBBEKER CONFIRMED THAT BELGIANS WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN GROUP, GIVING FOLLOWING REASONS FOR BELGIAN DECISION: (1) ALTHOUGH BELGIAN GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES THAT "SOMETHING" SHOULD BE DONE TO ASSIST RECONSTRUCTION OF VIETNAM. BELGIUM CURRENTLY SUFFERING FROM SHORTAGE OF DEVELOPMENT FUNDS AND STRIGENT BUDGETARY SITUATION; (2) IN VIEW TIGHTNESS OF DEVELOPMENT FUNDS, BELGIAN GOVERNMENT WISHES TO CONCENTRATE ITS AID TO COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AFRICA WHERE IT HAS TRADITIONAL INTERESTS AND WHERE OTHER COUNTRIES ARE NOT AS ACTIVELY INVOLVED; (3) BELGIAN HAS DECIDED NOT TO SPREAD ITS AID AROUND BUT TO CONCENTRATE ON SMALL NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WITH EMPHASIS ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED CATEGORY.

2. DEDOBBEKER EMPHASIZED THAT BELGIUM AS A SMALL COUNTRY

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COULD NOT DO ANYTHING VERY SIGNIFICANT FOR INDOCHINA, EVEN

IF IT DID PARTICPATE IN THE GROUP, AND ASKED WHY US WAS PRESSING SMALL COUNTRY PARTICIPATION. WHEN WE MADE ARGUMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION ALONG LINES REFTEL (B), DEBDOBBELER SAID THAT AS A RESULT OF THEIR EXPERIENCE IN KOREAN DONORS' GROUP SOME YEARS AGO, BELGIUM HAD DECIDED THAT IT WAS AWDWARD TO PARTICPATE IN DONORS' GROUPS TO WHICH THEY COULD MAKE SMALL OR NO FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION.

3. WHEN WE EMPHASIZED POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF MULTILATERAL EFFORT FOR INDICHINA, DEDOBBLER WENT TO GREAT PAINS TO EMPHASIZE THAT DECISION TAKEN BY BELGIAN GOVERNMENT ON NON-PARTICIPATION WAS NOT LIMITED TO TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS, BUT HAD BEEN CONSIDERED AT POLITICAL LEVELS IN FOREIGN OFFICE. IT WAS CLEAR THAT THERE MUST HAVE BEEN DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN FINANCE MINISTRY AND FOREIGN OFFICE AND THAT FINANCE MINISTRY HAD WON OUT. FIRESTONE

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